

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8366

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE NEW RESTRICTIONS ON TRANSFERRING APARTMENTS OF
JEWISH EMIGRANTS FROM LENINGRAD

1. MOSCOW JEWISH ACTIVIST SOURCES TELL US THAT NEW RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN PUT ON TRANSFER OF APARTMENTS OF JEWISH EMIGRANTS FROM LENINGRAD. PREVIOUSLY, WHEN PART OF A FAMILY WAS EMIGRATING THE FAMILY APARTMENT WAS USUALLY REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF ONE OF THE REMAINING MEMBERS WHO COULD LATER EXCHANGE THE LARGER APARTMENT FOR A SMALLER ONE (USUALLY WITH SOME CASH THROWN IN). NOW THERE HAS BEEN A CRACKDOWN ON THESE (TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL) APARTMENT EXCHANGES AND FAMILIES ARE BEING FORCED TO TURN THEIR LARGER APARTMENTS INTO COMMUNAL ONES. IN ADDITION, OVIR REPORTEDLY WILL NOT ACCEPT AN APPLICATION FOR EMIGRATION FROM ANYONE WHO HAS TRANSFERRED AN APARTMENT REGISTRATION WITHIN THE PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS.

2. SOURCES JOKINGLY SAID THAT THESE NEW PROCEDURES WERE LENINGRAD'S WAY OF FULFILLING PARTY FIRST SECRETARY ROMANOV'S PROMISE TO SOLVE LENINGRAD'S HOUSING SHORTAGE BY 1980 EVEN THOUGH THE OLYMPICS WILL ABSORB ALL CONSTRUCTION INVESTMENT UNTIL THEN.
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